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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
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Air Power: A Decisive Coercive Strategy?

by

David G. Van der Veer Jr.

Lt Col, USAF

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

Over the last 15 years US military and political leaders have turned to air power as the primary or sole military instrument of power during many conflicts. Air power is viewed as a rapid and low risk option to be used in a coercive strategy. This paper examines air power's role during Operation ALLIED FORCE in Kosovo and the recent Israeli-Hezbollah conflict in southern Lebanon. This paper defines the concept of coercive strategy and considers two case studies to see how effective air power was to actually compel an adversary leader to change his/her behavior. The paper analyzes air power's contributions to bringing the conflicts to an end, but also looks at other external factors that may have contributed to the successful application of a coercive strategy. The conclusions from this paper indicate that air power, by itself, is seldom the sole instrument to be used in a coercive strategy to compel an adversary.

Since the first airplane flew at Kitty Hawk, technology and doctrine have made the airplane a very important instrument of military and national power.¹ Past civilian and military air power theorists indicated that air power was the future to winning wars and conflicts and in some cases could be the single instrument. Air power's decisiveness in recent conflicts since the end of the cold war have made it a military instrument of choice for political and military leaders looking for a rapid, low risk resolution. Eliot Cohen summed it up five years before Operation ALLIED FORCE (OAF); he compared "air power's lately acquired seductiveness to modern teenage romance in its seeming propensity to offer political leaders a sense of gratification without commitment."² Air power, over other instruments of military power, has the advantage of speed, flexibility, range, survivability, and precision. This is not to say that other components do not have these attributes, but air power in general can be employed from secure operating bases, spend little time over the contested area of operations, and return for further tasking. These attributes make air power appealing to political leaders.

This paper considers two recent air-centric case studies to see if air power, as a single instrument of national and military power, can coerce or compel a state or non-state actor to change their behavior. This paper will examine the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) 1999 operation over Kosovo during OAF and the most recent Israeli-Hezbollah conflict in southern Lebanon in July-August 2006. Can air power alone achieve political and military objectives? As Americans and other nations become more averse to risking casualties and less committed to protracted conflicts, political leaders see air power as the strategy to leverage. This dilemma will face the operational military commanders and

planners in the future. By looking at past conflicts leaders can see what air power has accomplished and what air power, in concert with other military options, can synergistically achieve. Air power is a major enabler and in some cases a coercive force, but as future adversaries learn to adapt to mitigate the affects of air power, leaders must learn to adapt as well.

In General Giulio Douhet's book, *The Command of the Air*, he describes his view of the decisive affect of air power in war: "Would not the sight of a single enemy airplane be enough to induce a formidable panic? Normal life would be unable to continue under the constant threat of death and imminent destruction."³ Daniel L. Byman defines coercion as; "the use of threatened force to induce an adversary to behave differently than it otherwise would."⁴ There are two types of coercion; coercion by punishment and coercion by denial. Punishment is raising the costs or risks to the civilian population while denial is using military instruments of power to prevent the enemy from attaining its political objectives or goals.⁵ Air power can play a major role in successful coercive diplomacy by providing escalatory options based on its precision capabilities combined with its speed and flexibility.⁶

Coercive air strategies are broken into four main categories; punishment, risk, denial, and decapitation.⁷ The first, aerial punishment, attempts to inflict sufficient pain on enemy civilians and/or infrastructure to force the leadership to concede or the population to revolt against the government to end the conflict.⁸ The second is the manipulation of risk. The genesis of this strategy is to increase the risk of civilian damage (population and economic targets) slowly, compelling the opponent to concede.⁹ The coercive leverage in this strategy comes from the anticipation of future damage. This increased risk strategy is very important when trying to convince the enemy that targets will continue to be destroyed unless they

comply with the demands.¹⁰ The third strategy is denial; the use of air power to destroy military forces or weaken them to the point where friendly ground forces can seize the initiative without suffering heavy losses.¹¹ The denial strategy emphasizes the need for ground forces to deny the enemy victory in concert with the use of air power for enemy interdiction and close air support to friendly ground forces. The final air strategy is decapitation, which uses advances in precision weapons, to strike key leadership and/or command and control (C2) facilities.¹² The premise is the fielded force of an enemy state or non-state actor will collapse due to the lack of central leadership.¹³ Variations of these four air strategies are threaded in the OAF and Israeli-Hezbollah cases studies. The first case examines the 78-day air war over Kosovo. A review of the events leading up to and during the conflict is necessary to assess if air power proved coercive.

The United States (US) and NATO executed OAF from 24 March – 9 June 1999 against Slobodan Milosevic's military forces in Kosovo and Serbia. Events over the previous ten years were the prelude to conflict in the former Yugoslavia region. Since coming to power in 1989, Slobodan Milosevic had ended Kosovo's autonomy, imposed Serb rule, and began ethnic violence throughout the former Yugoslav Federation.¹⁴ In response, Kosovar Albanians seeking independence, formed the Kosovar Liberation Army (KLA) and began waging an insurgency against the Yugoslav army (VJ) and the Ministry of Interior Police Force (MUP) within Kosovo.¹⁵ In February 1998 Milosevic, in response to escalating attacks on his forces, attacked the KLA in the Drenica region of Kosovo where 80 Kosovar Albanians civilians were killed in the process.¹⁶ This attack prompted the Clinton administration to send Richard Holbrooke, a US special envoy, to Belgrade to formally request Milosevic to desist from continued acts of violence.¹⁷ These talks proved

unsuccessful and Milosevic continued the violence in Kosovo which prompted the United Nations (UN) to pass the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1199 on 23 September 1998. UNSCR 1199 basically demanded an immediate stop to the escalating violence and to improve the humanitarian situation in Kosovo.¹⁸

After UN involvement and the passage of the UNSCR 1199 Milosevic agreed to enter negotiations on autonomy for Kosovo. The negotiations also included a provision for the presence of unarmed international monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to verify compliance UNSCR 1199.¹⁹ However, Resolution 1199, the presence of OSCE monitors, and negotiations failed to stop the Serbian killings of Kosovar Albanians. In response, NATO declared to take all actions necessary, including air strikes, to compel Serb compliance and bring about a settlement in Kosovo.²⁰ The catalyst event, which led to NATO air strikes, occurred on 15 January 1999 when the MUP and Serb paramilitary troops entered the village of Racak and slaughtered 45 ethnic Albanians while pursuing members of the KLA.²¹ Prior to initiating air strikes, NATO announced that the military action would be aimed at stopping the violent attacks being committed by the VJ and MUP and weakening their ability to cause further human tragedy.²²

On 24 March 1999 NATO began OAF air strikes. OAF was planned as an air only operation primarily based on political constraints. US and NATO senior civilian leaders had basically ruled out using ground forces as part of an integrated campaign to meet NATO's objectives from the onset. The first reason was that Kosovo's rough terrain and poor access would prove to be difficult to support ground forces logistically. The primary driver was the belief by NATO leaders and President Clinton that the NATO allies and American people would be unwilling to accept combat casualties.²³ The political and military costs and risks

to committing ground forces appeared to be extreme.²⁴ Based on these political constraints air power became the instrument of choice because it minimized risk to friendly forces, could produce fairly high discriminate effects, and could be tailored by the leadership. In fact, air power seemed logical to allied political leaders based on the recent success of air power as a coercive strategy against Milosevic during Operation DELIBERATE FORCE in 1995.²⁵ One of the challenges that will affect this coercive air strategy against Milosevic was the public statements made by President Clinton and the Department of Defense (DoD). The White House basically stated the US had no intentions of sending ground troops to fight in Kosovo and that DoD was not be doing any deployment planning.²⁶ These words essentially signaled to Milosevic that most likely NATO's only option to force him to capitulate would be air strikes.

NATO's objectives for OAF were threefold. The first was to demonstrate how serious NATO was in stopping the aggression in Kosovo to promote peace in the region. The second was to deter Milosevic from continuing his attacks on civilians by imposing a price for those attacks. Lastly, if necessary, damage Yugoslavia's capacity to wage war against Kosovo in the future by seriously degrading its military capabilities.²⁷ Based on previous confrontations with Milosevic, most parties thought the air operation would be relatively short to force an end to atrocities in Kosovo. Because of this mindset NATO planners, during phase I, concentrated on a small set of integrated air defense and C2 targets during the first few days of the air operation. This quick solution did not occur after air strikes began. Not seeing any apparent risk to himself by the air strikes, Milosevic actually accelerated the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and appeared willing to ride out the air strikes.²⁸ Due to continued political pressure NATO decided to step up the air strikes to include

targeting fielded VJ and MUP forces in Kosovo. General Wesley Clark had previously determined that the fielded force was Milosevic's center of gravity.²⁹ In prosecuting these air strikes, the fielded forces in Kosovo proved difficult to attack because the VJ and MUP forces were able to disperse. The rugged terrain, thick cloud cover, and the 15,000 foot minimum ceiling for employing ordnance made positive target identification and minimized collateral damage to civilians extremely difficult.³⁰

Lt Gen Michael Short, the OAF Joint Force Air Component Commander, recognized how difficult air strikes against dispersed fielded forces were to execute. In fact, Lt Gen Short believed air power should be concentrated on fixed leadership targets in Yugoslavia since the air strikes against fielded forces were not stopping the killing in Kosovo.³¹ Phase II of OAF increased the target sets to fixed targets in Serbia in conjunction with interdiction strikes to cut VJ and MUP lines of communication.³² Air strikes during Phase II did inflict more damage, but at the same time it was not having the desired affect on Milosevic. In Phase III, NATO finally brought the war to Yugoslavia by escalating strikes against Milosevic, Serbian military leadership, C2 centers, weapon depots and factories, railways and fuel supply depots around Belgrade.³³ Air strikes, in the last week of the air war, against these final target sets actually caused more infrastructure damage than the first two months of OAF.³⁴

The daily and continued escalation of air strikes, especially the infrastructure strikes, did apply great pressure on the Yugoslav leadership.³⁵ In the end NATO's air strikes were instrumental to ultimately getting Milosevic to withdraw all Yugoslav forces from Kosovo, accept an international military presence in the province, end Serb violence, and allow the unconditional return of all Kosovar refugees.³⁶ On the surface OAF was the first large-scale

military operation in which air power, using the coercive air strategy of increased risk, actually compelled an enemy leader to yield without the use of friendly land combat forces.³⁷ It should also be noted that after 78-days of air strikes NATO forces suffered no combat casualties during OAF. This fact further promotes the idea to political leaders that air power can produce the desired results with limited casualties. In the same context, OAF proved to be a permissive environment for air power to operate within due to the limited surface-to-air and air-to air activity.

The OAF case study examined air power as a coercive strategy against a nation state adversary. The Israeli-Hezbollah conflict will examine a coercive air strategy used to oppose a non-state insurgent organization. Over the last 60 years Israel and its citizens have fought four major wars (1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973), several major conflicts, and thousands of local engagements against terrorists. In every one of these conflicts the Israeli Air Force (IAF) played a major role.³⁸ Most of Israel's wars and conflicts were fought over contested areas such as the Golan Heights, Gaza Strip, and Sinai to give Israel an increased buffer from the surrounding Arab nations. The Israeli-Hezbollah conflict, fought over a period of 34-days in southern Lebanon, initially relied heavily on air power to achieve Israel's objectives. This case study will examine the latest conflict between Israel and Hezbollah.

The Hezbollah (party of God) organization emerged in Lebanon after the Palestine Liberation Organizations (PLO) defeat following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon during Operation PEACE FOR GALILEE. Hezbollah, primarily comprised of Shiite Muslims, came into power to fill the void left by the PLO. Over the last two decades Hezbollah has developed into a major influence in Lebanon militarily and politically. Hezbollah provides education, loans, grants, and health care to the Shiite communities in southern Lebanon.³⁹

Hezbollah's primary objective has always been to remove Israeli presence from southern Lebanon.⁴⁰ Since Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah has built up a credible rocket force in the region and routinely employs these rockets against northern Israel. Over the years Israel has routinely responded to these rocket attacks with limited air strikes against Hezbollah forces. The events that took place in July-August 2006 were just one more chapter, spanning 24 years, in the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah on the Israeli northern border and southern Lebanon.

On 12 July 2006 Hezbollah forces attacked an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) patrol in the northern border of Israel near Lebanon and captured two IDF soldiers.⁴¹ The kidnapping of two IDF soldiers became the catalyst for Israel to initiate combat operations against Hezbollah. Preliminary analysis indicates the real reason for Israel's war with Hezbollah was the steady deployment of medium and long range rocket systems into southern Lebanon that were capable of striking targets throughout Israel.⁴² Regardless, the 12 July 2006 raid by Hezbollah provided Israel with a unique opportunity to try and eliminate the rocket launchers and Hezbollah organization.⁴³ Israel's response was to launch an aggressive air operation against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. This air-centric operation would eventually escalate to a major ground operation.

Israel went into the conflict with five stated objectives; destroy the Iranian Western Command before Iran could go nuclear, restore Israel's deterrence credibility in the region after the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005, force Lebanon to become an accountable state and effectively deal with Hezbollah, damage or cripple Hezbollah, and finally bring the two captured IDF soldiers home alive without trading prisoners held by Israel.⁴⁴ The coercive strategy concept in these five stated objectives was

the return of the two IDF soldiers and forcing Lebanon to become accountable for Hezbollah's actions in southern Lebanon. So why did Israel look to air power as a means to achieve their objectives?

Some military analysts indicate that Israel believed it could wage a Kosovo-style air war to eliminate most of Hezbollah's long and medium range rocket launchers and meet the rest of their objectives.⁴⁵ The Israeli Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Dan Halutz, is an air force officer by trade and there were indications that he may have exaggerated the capabilities of air power to Israel's political and military leadership. Even if the role of air power was exaggerated, Israeli military and political leaders did place severe restraints on ground action. Israel's leadership feared repeating another Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon which led to the war of attrition that started after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.⁴⁶ Both of these factors most likely led Israel to the conclusion that an air-centric operation into southern Lebanon was the right strategy to employ against Hezbollah and their rockets.

During the 34-day conflict the IAF flew over 15,500 sorties and attacked nearly 7,000 targets.⁴⁷ Early in the conflict the IAF did have very good success destroying the long range rocket systems using precision-guided weapons in conjunction with unmanned aerial vehicles providing real-time targeting intelligence. However, after nearly two weeks, the IAF failed to stop the Hezbollah rocket attacks into Israel or destroy Hezbollah fielded forces.⁴⁸ In fact, by 26 July 2006 Hezbollah had fired almost 1,400 rockets and missiles into Israel.⁴⁹ As the air war continued the IAF also actively bombed key interdiction targets. These interdiction targets included 70 bridges and 94 lines of communication choke points to cut off Hezbollah supply routes from Syria and Iran.⁵⁰

After nearly two weeks of non-stop air strikes the IAF was not achieving the objectives set at the beginning of the conflict. The Israeli Cabinet approved committing two IDF brigades into a major land operation to fight Hezbollah's forward lines of defense and secure southern Lebanon.⁵¹ During the ground operation the IDF committed nearly 15,000 troops and artillery into southern Lebanon, supported by the IAF.⁵² Hezbollah forces, facing a well organized combined arms team, proved to be a very difficult adversary to both the IAF and IDF. The main reason the IAF and IDF had difficulties engaging Hezbollah was the fact Hezbollah was using civilian population centers to store weapons and carry out offensive attacks.⁵³ This Hezbollah asymmetric dispersal tactic made it very difficult for the IAF and IDF to target Hezbollah kinetically. These kinetic operations involved high levels of collateral damage to the civilian population centers in Lebanon. Israeli forces did try to minimize casualties, but the overall impression in the international community was that Israel was not using a proportionate response in dealing with Hezbollah.⁵⁴ The fighting continued until both Israel and Hezbollah honored the UN proposed ceasefire.

After 34-days of fighting, determining a victor in this latest conflict seems difficult. It appears that Israel won this round based on UN intervention and the contents of the UNSCR 1701 adopted on 11 August 2006. UNSCR 1701 stated the following: cessation of all Hezbollah attacks, a new strengthened UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) of 15,000 troops, an embargo of weapons to Lebanese groups other than the government, armed Hezbollah elements are restricted from returning to southern Lebanon, and finally that there will be no armed groups foreign or domestic (armed Hezbollah militia) in Lebanon.⁵⁵ UNSCR 1701 also called for the unconditional release of the Israeli soldiers and for Lebanon to comply with UNSCR 1559 by deploying its army to southern Lebanon to disarm

Hezbollah. Looking back at Israel's five original objectives Israel only succeeded in damaging Hezbollah as an organization. At the time of this paper, the remaining objectives have not been achieved and Hezbollah still remains a credible force in southern Lebanon.

After examining the two preceding case studies the remainder of this paper will analyze and explore air power's role in compelling a change in behavior. Was air power, as a coercive force, the primary catalyst for forcing Milosevic and Hezbollah to capitulate? As mentioned previously each conflict was unique; OAF involved a state actor (Serbia) while the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict primarily involved a non-state actor (Hezbollah).

NATO's goal during OAF was to use air power to compel Milosevic to stop atrocities in Kosovo. Israel's goal was to cripple Hezbollah, force the return of two IDF soldiers, and stop rocket attacks against Israel. It can also be argued that Israel was also attempting to coerce the Lebanese government to be accountable for Hezbollah's actions. In each case study the primary type of coercion was a blend between risk, punishment, and denial. Both NATO and Israel did not intend to use aerial punishment against civilian populations to coerce the enemy into capitulation. This action may have been an unintended consequence by using air power. During OAF, denial was used initially to prevent VJ and MUP forces from completing the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians. However, as the air war escalated the use of risk and punishment was employed against military C2 targets and Belgrade's infrastructure to coerce Milosevic to capitulate. During the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict denial was used against Hezbollah to deny and prevent their ability to fire missiles and rockets into Israel. For Israel the punishment strategy was likely used to convince the Lebanese government to deal with Hezbollah or at least for international community, through the UN, to do so on Israel's behalf. So what were air power's contributions in both conflicts?

The plain fact that OAF was entirely executed using air power would suggest that air power forced Milosevic to agree to NATO's stated demands. In 78-days NATO flew over 30,000 sorties including 8,889 fighter, 322 bomber strike missions, and 834 special ops missions.⁵⁶ Did air power meet NATO's demand for Milosevic to stop the ethnic cleansing going on in Kosovo? The answer is probably no. The reason lies in NATO's early decision for an air-only operation. The air-centric strategy yielded the initiative to Milosevic which enabled his forces to continue the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians.⁵⁷ The lack of a ground invasion plan allowed Milosevic's forces the ability to disperse rather than have to mass against NATO ground forces.⁵⁸ As this paper has discussed, dispersal made the VJ and MUP more difficult for tactical air power to effectively locate, target, and destroy. In fact after the first few days of the air operation Milosevic's forces actually accelerated the killing in Kosovo.⁵⁹ By the end of the conflict it was apparent that air power alone did not stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Would the threat of a credible ground force combined with air power have stopped the killing sooner? The answer is most likely yes. In the end, due to dispersal the majority of VJ and MUP fielded forces actually survived the NATO air attacks overall.⁶⁰ Air power did prove to be instrumental in forcing Milosevic to capitulate when NATO brought the air war to Belgrade. The virtually unimpeded bombing of fixed targets in Serbia caused considerable damage to Belgrade's infrastructure and economy while also creating friction between Milosevic and army leadership.⁶¹

There were several other factors that probably influenced Milosevic. As the air war progressed, NATO leaders did see the requirement for a possible ground operation to stop the killing in Kosovo and bring an end to this conflict. Though the ground operation never occurred during OAF the threat of an impending ground invasion most likely altered how

Milosevic's thought the conflict would end. Contributing to this perception was the fact NATO ground forces, about equal in numbers to VJ forces in Kosovo, were building up in Macedonia and Albania. Another key factor influencing the perception of a ground invasion was General Clark's request for 24 Apache helicopters that deployed to Albania in April 1999 as part of Task Force (TF) Hawk.⁶² The plan for the Apache helicopters was to help NATO more effectively strike the fielded forces in Kosovo that were committing the atrocities.⁶³ Even though TF Hawk did not actively participate in OAF, their mere presence may have been interpreted by Milosevic as a precursor to a ground invasion.

The final, and possibly most decisive, influence was Russia's diplomatic role later in the war to support NATO which signaled the end of Russian support for Serbia.⁶⁴ On 1 June 1999 Russia and the US reached an agreement on terms for ending the air operation. Russian Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin and Finland's president Martti Ahtisaari were sent to meet with Milosevic and deliver NATO's terms.⁶⁵ In one of the few testimonies about the role air power played in ending OAF, Milosevic asked Chernomyrdin on 3 June 1999 in regards to NATO's ultimatum: "Is this what I have to do to get the bombing stopped?"⁶⁶ The answer from Finnish President Ahtisaari was: "This is the best you can get and it's only going to get worse for you."⁶⁷ The combination of continued air strikes, the possibility of a ground invasion, and Russia's ultimate support to NATO forced Milosevic to capitulate and meet NATO's demands.

The primary difference between OAF and the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict was the fact that Israel introduced ground forces after two weeks. Israeli air power during their fight with Hezbollah did prove to have a decisive effect, but probably not in the way it was intended at the onset of the conflict. The IAF is the cornerstone military instrument in Israel's defense

strategy, which decidedly impacted the decision to rely on air power early in this conflict. Another factor was Israel's military and political leadership's reluctance to put ground forces into action and repeating the war of attrition.⁶⁸ The air-centric beginning might also stem from the fact that the IDF ground forces were not prepared. This assertion was based on Israel's late IDF reserve call ups and accelerated training when it became obvious the IAF alone could not achieve Israel's objectives.⁶⁹

Regardless of whether the IAF exaggerated the role of air power to attain Israel's objectives or that it was the only military instrument available at the time, it appears that the IAF had a difficult time against an asymmetric adversary. The IAF and IDF also underestimated Hezbollah's ability to fight and survive using dispersal and the urban environment to even the playing field.⁷⁰ Israel probably did not examine lessons learned from previous conflicts with Hezbollah to employ the right strategy. The IAF only had limited success in previous engagements with Hezbollah, as was the case with the IAF's effectiveness during Operation GRAPES OF WRATH (March-May 1996). In response to previous repeated Hezbollah Katyusha rocket attacks against Israel, the IAF conducted uninterrupted day and night strikes in southern Lebanon in the spring of 1996.⁷¹ The end result, after hundreds of strikes in concert with 13,000 artillery rounds, was Israel did not stop the rocket attacks or force the Lebanese government to respond against Hezbollah.⁷²

During the most recent Israeli-Hezbollah conflict the IAF did have significant success destroying most of Hezbollah's long range rocket/missile launchers. However, the IAF only had limited success against Hezbollah's shorter range rockets. In the end did the IAF prevent Hezbollah from employing rockets into Israel? The answer is no. By the end of the conflict Hezbollah had fired over 3,970 rockets/missiles into northern Israel.⁷³ Did the IAF help

restore Israel's deterrent potential in the region? The conclusion is that the damage inflicted on and the relative impunity the IAF had over southern Lebanon had some deterrent impact on Hezbollah and Lebanon.⁷⁴ Did Israel coerce the Lebanese government to take responsibility for containing Hezbollah? The answer at this time is no, but the future may hold promising. In the end did the IAF facilitate conflict resolution? Israel's escalation strategy did create international pressure on the UN, which ultimately facilitated the end of the conflict.⁷⁵ Hezbollah only agreed to the ceasefire and it will be a matter of time to see if UNSCR 1701, UNIFIL, and the Lebanese government will be able to disarm and remove Hezbollah from southern Lebanon. For now Hezbollah remains a strong non-state actor in Lebanon, both militarily and politically, and will continue to be a threat to Israel.⁷⁶

Air power's flexibility and speed provides commanders with the ability to escalate a range of military options while mitigating friendly casualties.⁷⁷ For escalation to be effective, the military instrument chosen must be able to impose a greater cost on the adversary ultimately forcing submission.⁷⁸ Future adversaries will expect the use of air power, as part of a coercive strategy, and will adapt their own strategy to counter or at least mitigate the affects of air power.⁷⁹ Insurgent organizations and other non-state actors like Hezbollah typically do not have economic infrastructures like state actors. This makes insurgents extremely difficult to physically attack with air power to bring about a coercive result. In both case studies the fielded forces ability to disperse and use the local population made it very difficult for air power to engage directly or interdict. Command of the air over the battle space does make movement in large numbers very difficult for both state and non-state adversaries. However, the smaller groups make air power less decisive in a classic conventional role.

Both case studies examined the use of an air power strategy in coercive diplomacy. A common theme is that coercive diplomacy requires a credible threat of force to be effective in changing an adversary's behavior.⁸⁰ Both OAF and the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict do illustrate that air power was instrumental, but not the single explanation why either adversary capitulated. In both case studies air operations were conducted in a forgiving threat environment. Air power can play a vital role in successful coercion strategies based on its ability to destroy a range of targets with precision-guided weapons in concert with timely intelligence.⁸¹ However, using air power alone to coerce an adversary in today's threat environment will take time, and time may impact America's or a coalition's resolve during conflict. To make military force in coercive diplomacy more effective a more synergistic approach of combining air and ground operations should be considered to accomplish the military objective. This does not mean an actual ground invasion will be necessary, but planning for one can be instrumental to a coercive strategy.

In conclusion, air power was a major factor in deciding the outcomes of both conflicts; however, the use of air power alone did not fully compel the mindset or behavior of the adversaries. As the US looks at future conflicts, political and military leaders must resist the temptation to develop a coercive strategy solely based on air power because it offers a low risk option. Over the last 15 years the US has had the luxury of conducting operations in primarily permissive environments. Lack of a credible air force, integrated air defense system, and/or a leadership that does not intend to fully employ one has enabled the US military to command the air. The key is for military/political leaders to fully understand what motivates an adversary and what unique capability air power can employ to make the coercive strategy work.

NOTES

¹ Michael E. Ryan, foreword to *Air Force Doctrine Document 2-1* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Force Doctrine Center, 2000), i.

² Eliot Cohen is the author of “The Mystique of US Air Power.” Benjamin S. Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and operational Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 29.

³ Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1942), 58.

⁴ Daniel L. Byman, Matthew C. Waxman, and Eric Larson, *Air Power as a Coercive Instrument* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1999), 1.

⁵ Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 13.

⁶ Byman, *Air Power a Coercive Instrument*, xvi.

⁷ Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 58.

⁸ Ibid., 59.

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¹⁰ Ibid., 67.

¹¹ Ibid., 69.

¹² Ibid., 79.

¹³ Ibid., 80.

¹⁴ Benjamin S. Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and operational Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 6.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Bruce R. Nardulli, Walter L. Perry, Bruce Pirnie, John Gordon IV, and John G. McGinn, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo*, 1999 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), 21.

²³ Lambeth, *NATO’s Air War for Kosovo*, 12.

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- ²⁴ Nardulli, *Disjointed War*, 3.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 11.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 22.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 4.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 33.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 48.
- ³¹ Ibid., 34.
- ³² Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 25.
- ³³ Ibid., 38.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 70.
- ³⁵ Nardulli, *Disjointed War*, 44.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 1.
- ³⁷ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, xxi.
- ³⁸ Lon O. Ordeen, *Fighters over Israel* (New York: Orion Books, 1990), 1.
- ³⁹ Youssef H. Aboul-Enein, "The Hezbollah Model: Using Terror and Creating a Quasi-state in Lebanon," *Marine Corps Gazette*, June 2003, 34.
- ⁴⁰ Martin van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israeli Defense Force* (New York: Public Affairs, 1998), 304.
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- ⁴³ George Monbiot, "Israel Responded to an Unprovoked Attack by Hezbollah, Right? Wrong," *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, September/October 2006, 12-13.
- ⁴⁴ Cordseman, *Preliminary Lessons*, 4.
- ⁴⁵ Molly Moore, "Israelis Confront 'New Kind of War' High-Tech Tactics Fail to Halt Rocket Fire," *The Washington Post*, 9 August 2006, sec. A, A11.
- ⁴⁶ Cordseman, *Preliminary Lessons*, 4.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁹ Arie Egozi, "Israeli Air Power Falls Short," *Flight International*, 1-7 August 2006, 21.

⁵⁰ Cordseman, *Preliminary Lessons*, 6.

⁵¹ Ibid., 27.

⁵² Ibid., 3.

⁵³ Ibid., 14.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁵⁵ United Nations Secretariat, *UN Security Council Resolution 1701*, 11 August 2006, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8808.doc.htm>.

⁵⁶ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 63.

⁵⁷ Nardulli, *Disjointed War*, xiv.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 112.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 112.

⁶¹ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 70.

⁶² Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 2000), 125.

⁶³ Nardulli, *Disjointed War*, 80.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 76.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Cordseman, *Preliminary Lessons*, 4.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 18.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 9.

⁷¹ van Crevald, *The Sword and the Olive*, 305.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Cordseman, *Preliminary Lessons*, 28.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁷ Byman, *Air Power a Coercive Instrument*, 130.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Daalder, *Winning Ugly*, 208.

⁸¹ Byman, *Air Power a Coercive Instrument*, 129.

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